

Bye Bye Rosie Off You Go to Birmingham Via Great Western

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by [acatalepsy](#)

Summary

The Dream Team accidentally take teasing George about his colourblindness a bit too far.

Dream deals with the fallout.

Notes

The title is a common electronic colour code mnemonic taught in UK engineering courses. Which is quite cool! Except for the fact that I very clearly went to art school and if you are an engineer reading this fic I am sorry because I obviously don't know how electronics work even a tiny bit. Suspend your belief, friends.

Gogy — Today at 4:22 PM

help

Gogy — Today at 4:23 PM

[Image description: A disassembled computer strewn out across the floor of a grey-carpeted office. Multicoloured wires and cables lay tangled in a heap along with several screws, a screwdriver, panelling, circuit boards. A certain 5'9 brunette British man lies on the ground amidst the carnage, with a look of what can only be described as despair on his face. He clutches a cable in his left hand.]

Sapnap — Today at 4:30 PM

jesus christ, what am i even looking at

Gogy — Today at 4:30 PM

what colour is it

BBH — Today at 4:31 PM

there's a LOT going on here

Sapnap — Today at 4:31 PM

?

Gogy — Today at 4:32 PM

the one in my hand

Sapnap — Today at 4:32 PM

its purple

Gogy — Today at 4:33 PM

i know that none of these are purple, asshole

Sapnap — Today at 4:35 PM

no lol

Dream — Today at 4:45 PM

dude it IS purple

Gogy — Today at 4:45 PM

shut UP,, i hate you guys. just tell me what fucking colour it is. is it orange or green or yellow?

Sapnap — Today at 4:46 PM

i would call it a faint lime

Dream — Today at 4:47 PM

i was thinking more of a chartreuse

BBH — Today at 4:47 PM

don't listen to them, gogy. it's purple for sure

Gogy — Today at 4:50 PM

you guys actually suck. yk i've literally got like sixty more of these to go

Dream — Today at 5:10 PM

good luck babe !!!!

Dream — Today at 5:10 PM

u can do it

-> **Gogy** has left the server.

* * *

It's two in the morning the next day when Clay's phone starts ringing.

He lets out a yawn, lazily spins around in his chair and kicks his legs out, propping them up on his

desk. His vision's a bit bleary from so long staring at lines of code on a screen, and he was honestly thinking of getting to bed soon, but when he notices the caller ID is 'Gogy' a sleepy smile spreads across his face.

The moment he answers the Facetime call George's voice immediately comes pouring out of the speakers at breakneck speed. His face is about five times too close to the camera, blurry and out of focus, the screen cropping it so just his eye and part of his nose are visible.

"Help me, Dream. Dream, help. You gotta help me." He's putting on a voice so that he sounds nasal and comically concerned.

"Hello," Clay drawls, holding his phone in the air above himself. He never turns his camera on, even after all this time, so same as always all George is getting from him is a black screen. For extra safety he's actually got a little Dream-shaped smiley-face sticker taped over his front-facing cam.

"Dream. Listen. This is an urgent matter."

"I'm sure. To what *predicament* do I owe my expertise?" He continues to spin around, gazing up at his ceiling fan.

He honestly loves these late-night calls with George. When they're just able to talk, mess around without having to feel like they have to be 'on' or performing all the time. When they can just ... be. Although — it's typically George who ends up staying awake at all hours of the night in order for them to chat, not him, what with the four hour time difference. He frowns.

"Why are you still up at ...?" He glances at the clock. "Six in the morning?"

George yawns, as if only just realising then that he might be tired. There are Wilbur-esque dark smudges beneath his eyes. "It's *six*? Crap. Did I wake you up?"

"Nah. Don't worry. Just working on some shit. What's up?"

George blinks for a moment, looking only half sentient. He's rubbing the back of his neck like he's been hunched over for too long. "What? Oh! My *dilemma*."

Clay snorts. "You're so ... disheveled right now. I feel like I'm talking to an old man."

"My neck *hurtssss*," George drags out the last syllable. "*Dream*. You have no idea the pain I'm in. I *hate* building computers. This is a *nightmare*."

"Building ... Wait. Are you telling me your floor *still* looks like what you sent through Discord yesterday? Dude, you procrastinate more than I do." He watches as George scrunches up his nose in exasperation at his words. It's adorable. "Your hair looks good. By the way."

"It's messy."

See: scruffy. See: cute.

"*Exactly*."

George rolls his eyes, but he's still smiling. "You're so weird."

"What did you need my help with?"

The camera shakes for a moment and goes askew as George fumbles around. There's a blur of

colour and rustling before the image comes into focus again, switching to the camera on the back of George's phone as he sorts through a sea of cables, before shoving one into the foreground. It's bright, sunshine yellow. Obviously.

"What colour is this?"

"Green," Clay says automatically. As is his natural instinct to be a shit apparently.

The camera whips around to reveal an unimpressed George with narrowed eyes.

"Are you serious? Are you being a hundred percent *truthful* right now that this is *green*?" George holds up the cable again and stares into the lens, incredulity painted across his features.

"... Yes."

"You're so full of shit." George groans. "Can I *please* just get a straight answer for once."

Evidently, after all this time his best friend can apparently read him *way* too well even just based on his voice. Clay has no idea what mind reading abilities he'll be capable of once George is actually able to see his face in person.

"Okay, sorry." He chuckles, feeling slightly bad. "Sorry. I was just being a dick. It's yellow. I'm being serious now."

"That's what you *just said* after telling me it was green! How am I supposed to trust you now!"

"Well ..." Clay opens and closes his mouth, at a loss. "I ... don't know. But I'm being honest now! Really. *It is* yellow."

There's a slamming sound and the camera jerks and smacks onto George's desk aggressively, where he's laying with his forehead pressed against the hard surface.

"I give *up*."

"Come on — you can do this. You literally went to school to become a computer engineer. You've got a *degree* in this shit." Clay puts on his best mock-inspirational voice. "You can figure it out. I believe in you!"

George glares into the camera. "You *suck*."

"*Love you too, Gogy.*"

* * *

So ... Clay's fucked up.

He's not exactly sure *what* exactly. But he's definitely done ... something.

Over the course of he and George's friendship, he's found that George isn't really the type of person to outright state when he's pissed with you. He just kind of ... gets very quiet, and irritable, and snappy.

As a naturally confrontational person it actually makes Clay a bit nervous, if he's being honest. Instead of clearing the air or being outright with his emotions he just kind of ... stew in it. Maybe

that's a British thing. He doesn't know.

It's been a week, with an odd stream here and there, but for the most part they haven't talked much at all these past few days. Which is kind of weird.

Finally, they've managed to get on call at the same time to film, but instead of things going smoothly they've been trying to shoot this silly mod video for George's channel for about an hour now. And Clay can just feel the whole thing falling flat. It's so freaking awkward — which is really unusual for the two of them. The whole atmosphere is tense, with George going silent for minutes at a time just clicking his mouse, mashing T-F-G-H, and walking around not doing much of anything really. It feels ... pointed. Almost passive aggressive. Clay has no idea how much he's reading into things, but either way there's no way they're going to be getting any usable content out of this.

Eventually he just groans and leans back in his chair, staring up at the ceiling, giving up on trying to coax George out of his *mood* with jokes or their usual quasi-flirtatious 'thing'.

"Seriously, dude. What's your deal?"

"My *deal*?"

"Yeah. Your deal. You've been acting all ..." He tries to find a diplomatic way to phrase it, waving his hand around as if to pluck it from the air. "Quiet."

Another chunk of incredibly pointed silence rings out and Clay has to sit up to double check that his friend is even still there. Sure enough, though, he finds George continuing to stare blankly ahead, destroying dirt blocks and looking incredibly bored.

"... Hello?"

"I'm here."

"Are you ..." Clay takes a deep breath. "Are you okay?"

Perhaps this is the better way to go about things, because George's expression softens ever so slightly as he sighs, raking a hand through his hair and adjusting his headphones.

"Yeah, yeah. I — Sorry. This video idea is a bit shit, isn't it? I don't know why I suggested it."

"It's okay. We can take a break."

"Mm-hmm."

In George's facecam Clay can see the way he purses his lips and looks away, annoyance glancing across his features before quickly vanishing again.

"Dude. What *is it*?" He's actually getting frustrated now. Why the hell is George always so fucking *squirrely*? "Have I done something to piss you off?"

"Maybe." George shrugs.

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"I don't know." He says bluntly. "I'm sure you'll *just figure it out*."

"What?"

George rolls his eyes.

“You’re so fucking cryptic. Just talk to me. Whatever it is I’ve done, I’m sorry. Just — just let me know so I can *fix it*, okay?”

George looks into the lens, then he blinks and messes with his camera, physically picking it up and moving around his set-up so that Clay can see the carnage that is the floor of George’s office. Cables and wires are strewn everywhere, leading to exposed circuit boards, outlets. It looks a bit like if a computer could vomit rainbows. A screwdriver is discarded nearby next to several more panels than before.

“Seriously? You’re honestly *still* working on that?”

“Are you fucking kidding me? *Obviously, I am!*” George snaps, and Clay’s actually taken aback at how *genuinely* angry he sounds. He hasn’t ever heard him like that outside of game, outside of a joke.

“I —”

There’s a deep breath from the other side of the camera and it tilts back so that Clay can see George’s face once more.

“I’m sorry, Dream. I ... I’m being a prick. I’m just —” He scrubs at his face. “— Frustrated as hell and taking it out on you is ... It’s shitty. It’s just literally been like, I-don’t-know-how-many hours of trying to get this set up.”

“Hours?”

It should take like, half-an-hour *tops* to complete something like George is working on. Everything should’ve been rigged up *days* ago. Clay had just assumed he’d gotten busy with filming or something. Or he was procrastinating, or bored, or playing video games.

“*Yes?* I tried to get you guys to help me over Discord and you were all just fucking around like ‘oh, that one’s purple! ha *ha*’ and then I literally Facetime you and you’re like — making the same shitty jokes and then telling me to just use trial and error to ‘figure it out’ like I’m not doing that *already*.”

... Oh.

“Ah, fuck. George —”

“I get that it’s amusing. Or funny. Or whatever. When I have no clue what’s going on but — I just. *I don’t like it*. It’s ... It’s disorienting, okay?”

It sounds so ... shitty, so pointedly cruel of them, when he puts it like that. George had never really given an indication that their teasing bothered him before. Or maybe he had?

“Holy shit. I had no — I mean, I didn’t — When you —”

“It’s fine.” George rubs at his mouth self-consciously, avoiding eye-contact with the camera. “It’s just. This is so embarrassing, but ... I would rather just not ask for you guys for help at all than have you like, *mess with my brain*. Ugh, that sounds weird. But — Like, I get it as a *bit* on stream or whatever but — I don’t know. I just hate feeling like you guys are all in on this *thing* and laughing about it or whatever and I just have no way of knowing if I’m being fucked with or not.”

“I’m really sorry. Man, I had no clue. I swear to God.” Clay winces.

I feel like such an asshole, he wants to say. But he doesn’t. Because he knows George will immediately try to comfort *him* somehow and he doesn’t want that.

George laughs lightly. “Sorry for being so ... dramatic. Jesus. I need to get more sleep or something.”

“*George*. Shut up, okay. You’re not —“ He shakes his head. “You’re not being oversensitive or ... whatever you’re getting at right now. What the hell.”

Every interaction he’s ever had where he’s deliberately lied to George about what colour something is for a joke, for a ‘bit’, for *whatever* is compulsively cycling through his head. How many of those times did George secretly feel this way?

He’s *really* fucked up.

“All right. *No*. Dude, what. I’ll help you. I’ll help you, just — switch back to your iPhone. Let me get another look at everything.”

“What, you don’t want to see my beautiful face in 4K anymore?”

“Yeah. I just can’t stand looking at you. You’re *so ugly*.”

“After this? I’m filing for a divorce.”

George deposits his camera back on his desk and switches over to his phone. When he does, Clay can more clearly see the dark circles beneath George’s eyes and winces as the screen switches it over to the back camera once more.

“All right. Here’s ... the uh, eighth wonder of the world currently taking up residence in my home.” George slowly pans across the absolute mess on the floor.

It’s ... a lot. But manageable.

“Okay. Yeah, no. I can work with this. So pick up — that one, on the — Yeah.” Clay nods, despite the fact that George can’t see him. “That one’s red so you need to connect it up on the far left ...”

They work their way through all the cables on the floor, reconnecting everything up as it should be, fixing anything in the wrong place. It ends up actually taking around two hours, not just thirty minutes, because they end up getting distracted, going on tangents and talking about random stuff. Or rather, Clay goes on tangents, and then George eventually brings him back to what they’re working on. But soon it gets done and George’s office floor is gloriously clean once more and no longer reminiscent of the disassembled Apollo Guidance Computer responsible for the literal moon landing, that also happens to have been transported to Brighton and *exploded*. In the end, they don’t even end up hanging up and just talk until they eventually both fall asleep on call together.

A week later George lets Clay know that he has for some reason received a package from him in the mail that day containing a packet of Jolly Ranchers wrapped in duct tape and a huge box of polyolefin wire markers. That night they go on Facetime and label every single cable in the house George could possibly ever need to identify while Clay is given an exclusive ‘American Candy Taste Test’ — which is really just George doing a hilarious parody of every shitty YouTube video ever and pulling stupid faces.

After that, it's pretty much mutually agreed upon that Clay is always going to be completely straight with George when it comes to stating what colour things are outside of game. Ergo, he's not going to 'fuck with' him anymore. Plus, he helps out whenever George asks for it. Which honestly isn't all that often outside of a few weirdly specific circumstances. It actually makes him feel kind of, this weird fluttery sensation in his chest, that he's able to be useful somehow; that George is able to trust him like that.

For the most part his newly appointed best-friend-duties just consist of him occasionally answering a Facetime call to double check outfits on the rare mornings when George deviates from his typical hermit routine to venture out of his apartment to the shops. Either that or replying to photos on Discord. Where everyone nine times out of ten takes the piss out of his fashion sense, Clay just thumbs-up-reacts or replies if anything is clashing.

A month later he gets a video call at six in the morning while hunched over, pouring milk into a bowl of just *horrifically* bad Minecraft-themed cereal — cereal which he's quite certain is going to be the cause of his first real experience with a kidney stone ... or something. Whatever medical outcome it manifests, it does not seem like it was designed to be ingested by human beings. Or, actually any living beings.

He lets his spoon drop back into the bowl with a *plop*, swiping his thumb across the screen to answer. "What's up?"

George's face fills his vision. He's brightly lit by fluorescents in the middle of a busy, hyper-saturated supermarket. In the background there's the faint jingle of some new Taylor Swift song. George thrusts a fruit up to the camera for Clay to see.

"I need your help. Is this a lime or a lemon? Is it good?"

He laughs. "Lime. It looks fine. Uh ... ripe. For what? What are you making?"

"Pancakes."

"... Pancakes? Or *crêpes*?"

"*Pancakes*."

"Oh my God, George. They're *literally* crêpes."

George raises his voice, his passion about the topic obviously overshadowing any sense of shyness in public. "How many times do I have to say it? They are *pancakes* in the UK! Pancakes!"

"George. Sweet *sweet*, naïve George."

"Oh my god. Shut *up*."

"You're in denial."

"Just — what about this. Tell me what I'm looking at right now." He glares at the camera before turning it back to the produce aisle.

"Lemons are on the right, dude. Don't they literally just say at the bottom which is which? With the price? And isn't green a darker shade anyway?"

There's a long pause. "... I'm an idiot."

Clay wheezes.

"*Listen* — I don't know! What if some of them are mixed up. Or ... one of them isn't ... ripe or something!"

He keeps laughing.

"You're so annoying." George rolls his eyes, but his expression is fond. "I ... I mean, I guess I *kind of knew that already* but — well, I wanted to make sure or — Yeah." He shrugs. "I just wanted to call you."

Clay almost chokes, not entirely sure he heard that right. "You *what?*"

"I'm not saying it again."

"Well, uh." He rubs the back of his neck. "If you ... Ever need to — or want to — call me again. You know I'm gonna answer."

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